



PRESS RELEASE

African Renewed Efforts for Regional Peace and Security

For the last few weeks Ethiopia has been pushing for additional sanctions that essentially target the Eritrean people in direct contrast to the path adopted by the AU Summit in Malabo in addressing issues of peace and security in the African region.

While Eritrea has been patiently and relentlessly appealing for several years to the Security Council to pressure Ethiopia to withdraw its forces from territories awarded to Eritrea by the independent Eritrea Ethiopia Boundary Commission, sadly, Ethiopia has been seeking, in a frenzied campaign, for more severe economic sanctions on Eritrea under the pretext that Eritrea is playing a destabilizing role in the Horn of Africa. The “AU plot of January 2011” which is being flagged as the making of Eritrea, including in the recently published report of the UN Monitoring Group, runs contrary to the deeply held principle of Eritrea on terrorism. Eritrea, let alone as an independent state, even at its grimmest moments of armed struggle for independence, under the leadership of the Eritrean Peoples Liberation Front, did not adopt terrorist acts as a means of achieving its objectives. It was an alien concept then and it remains so now. The accusations that Eritrea is destabilizing the region is a distortion of Eritrea’s foreign policy and a deliberate exaggeration of its capacity which could be in many ways compared to the way WMD issue was packaged and sold to the international community to justify the invasion of Iraq in 2003. For further information a reference could be made to document no. S/2011/494 of 5 August 2011.

To advance its objectives of regime change and to get access to the Red Sea, once again Ethiopia, without any due regard to the AU Summit decision and without addressing the matter at the regional level, is desperately campaigning for additional stringent sanctions on Eritrea that will harm the economic well being and security of the Eritrean people. This is being pushed through a draft resolution which has been recently issued confidentially. The Government of Ethiopia is putting countless diplomatic and political pressures on the three African Council members to table it on its behalf to the UN Security Council. The draft briefly aims, among others, to achieve the following objectives:-

- For all countries to take preventive measures against remittances to Eritrea;
- For all countries to prevent companies from investing in the mining sector and other extractive industries of Eritrea and to prohibit the importation of gold from Eritrea; and
- For all Member States and international financial institutions not to extend grants, financial assistance or loans to Eritrea.

The move by Ethiopia certainly goes against what the AU Summit decided in July 2011. The African Union Summit in Malabo, Equatorial Guinea, adopted a decision that aims to assist Eritrea and Ethiopia to overcome their problems. It states:

“REITERATES ITS CONCERN at the continued impasse in the peace process between Eritrea and Ethiopia. The Assembly EMPHASIZES, ONCE AGAIN, the need for renewed African efforts to help the two countries to peacefully resolve their dispute, normalize their relations and lay the foundation for lasting peace and security in the Horn of Africa, and ENCOURAGES the two countries to extend the



necessary cooperation to any such efforts, including those to be deployed by the Chairperson of the Commission;”

However, Ethiopia is in no mood to entertain any peaceful approach to regional issues. In May 2009, when IGAD, led by Ethiopia, visited New York with the purpose of seeking a sanction on Eritrea, it was then informed to exhaust the issue at the regional level and was forced to go back to the African Union. That being the precedence, Ethiopia has chosen to overstep the AU decision and it is waiving its draft resolution and an IGAD Communiqué to achieve severe economic, political and diplomatic sanctions from the UN Security Council. Acquiescence to this demand would pave the way for Ethiopia’s military adventurism in Eritrea, in the same way it did in Somalia in December 2006 with impunity. This is a violation of the UN Charter and runs counter to what the AU has put on the table; and it is procedurally inappropriate and unacceptable.

It must be recalled that the adoption of the unjust UN Security Council resolution 1907 in December 2009 has not only created an imbalance in the region, but has also unfairly tied the hands of Eritrea from exercising its legitimate right to defend itself against any possible military attacks. That measure taken on Eritrea has emboldened Ethiopia to publicly announce its plan to overthrow the Government of Eritrea by military means and to engage in shopping of arms with the clear intention of using it against Eritrea.

At this time what is required is not isolationist measure that would destabilize the region, but diplomatic and political efforts that will build trust and confidence among the countries of the region. Eritrea has already taken concrete steps to reactivate its membership in IGAD, and it is also taking steps to strengthen its relationship with the countries in the sub-region.

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